Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by 2000 A.D. and latest by 2005 A.D. Two rounds of tariff preference negotiations under SAPTA have made a good beginning. Economic cooperation in areas of intra-regional investment promotion and protection, avoidance of double taxation, customs cooperation has also been initiated. Technical cooperation has been pursued through 11 technical committees covering areas of agriculture, communications, environment and meteorology, rural development, science and technology etc. In the social field, significant progress has taken place in the consideration of the theme of poverty alleviation, youth, disabled, literacy and children, with particular emphasis on the girl child.

(b) and (c). There is no proposal to extend the scope of SAARC to establish a common market or a common currency among SAARC member-states.

[Translation]

Flood Control

1486. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any schemes was formulated a by the Prime Minister for implementing the declaration made by him in the last Session of Lok Sabha with regard to action plan to deal with the problem of flood control after studying the flood affected areas of Eastern India, Rajasthan and Agra and Mathura areas of Uttar Pradesh with the help of team of flood experts which included the experts of Planning Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan Governments have also submitted any short term and long term schemes to the expert Committee and the Union Government to control floods;

(d) if so, the detailed opinion of the Expert Committee and the Government thereof; and

(e) the detailed action taken by the Government on the report of the Expert Committee?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b). Ministry of Water Resources has constituted five Regional Task Forces on 30th September, 1996 with participation of senior level officers of Central as well as State Governments to examine regional flood problems, review existing remedial measures and to recommend measures for comprehensive solutions.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The Task Forces are required to submit their report within six months. The first meeting of the Regional Task Forces will be held shortly.

[English]

Regulatory Board for Privatization of Ports

1487. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALE :
SHRI K. PARASURAMAN :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the progress made on major projects under private sector and proposals under consideration particularly in Maharasthra for development of ports;

(b) whether the Government propose to create a Regulatory Board for promoting investment by private sector for the development of ports in the country; and

(c) if so, the details and present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) A list of projects for which approval for private sector participation stands given in the enclosed Statement. These include the major ports of Bombay and Jawaharlal Nehru in Maharashtra.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

STATEMENT

List of Approved Private Sector Participation Projects

Leasing of Existing Berths/Assets of the Port

1. Leasing of berth No. 6 at Kandla Port to M/s. Geepee Corporation limited, Bangkok for handling bulk and break bulk cargoes.
2. Madras Port Trust has entered into a long term berth reservation agreement with M/s. Bengal Tiger Lines.
3. Leasing of berths at Haldia Dock Complex to Steel Authority of India Limited and TISCO.
4. Bombay Port Trust entered into an agreement with M/s. American President Lines for use of berth No. 1, Indra Dock Complex.
5. Leasing of NS Dry Docks 1 and 2 with adjacent lands and wet berths etc. to M/s. Chowkhani Shipyard (Bengal) Limited for ship repair facilities at Calcutta Port.

Creation of Storage Facilities/Warehouses

6. Leasing of land to M/s. SPIC for storage and despatch of LPG in Tuticorin Port.
7. Leasing of land to M/s. Suraj Agro Private Limited at Madras Port for creation of storage facilities for non-hazardous liquid bulk cargo.
8. Leasing of land to M/s. Ganesh Benzoplast Limited for creation of storage facilities for Class "B" and "C" liquid chemicals.